on IEC activities and training of all medical officers and health staff at district level. Block Leprosy Awareness Campaigns were conducted through intensified IEC and Leprosy Counseling Centres at block level.

District Technical support Team are being provided to these States to support and strengthen the activities of National Leprosy Eradication Programme at state and district level.

Various Non Governmental Organisation (NGOs) are also being provided funds (Grant-in-aid) by Government of India to carry out leprosy diagnosis treatment services and prevention of deformities in leprosy patients.

(c) At present no targets have been fixed to eradicate leprosy completely in the country. The goal of National Health Policy 2002 was elimination of leprosy as a public health problem at National level (i.e. Prevalence of less than 1 case/10,000 population) by December, 2005 and not the eradication. With a prevalence of 0.95/10,000 population, India has already achieved elimination of leprosy as national level by December, 2005. Now the programme is continuing with its focus of attention on endemic districts, endemic urban localities, districts with high disability rate and states with high child proportion.

Banning of Gutkha

1272. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to ban gutkha items in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have consulted the States before implementing such proposal;

(d) if so, the suggestions received from the States; and

(e) the date by which the proposed ban will come into force?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, draft rules further to amend PFA Rules, 1955 have been published in the Gazette of India vide notification GSR 694 (E) dated 28.11.2005 which *inter alia* propose that tobacco, alcoholic beverages and nicotine shall not be used as an

ingredient in proprietary products. Proprietary food means a food which has not been standardized under PFA Rules, 1955 and Gutka is marketed as proprietary food.

(c) and (d) The draft rules are based on the recommendations of Central Committee for Food Standards, a statuary Committee constituted under PFA Act, 1954, which has representives from States/UTs.

(e) The objections and suggestions have been invited from on the proposed draft amendments which would be considered by the Central Government before the notification is finalized.

Funds for SVIMS and NIMS

1273. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have released the funds to Shri Venkateshwara Institute of Medical Sciences (SVIMS) and Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) in Andhra Pradesh upon the request of the Government of Andhra Pradesh during the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) and (c) Under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY), *inter alia* there is a proposal for upgradation of Sri Venkateshwara Institute of Medical Sciences (SVIMS), Tirupati and Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), Hyderabad, with a total outlay of Rs. 180 Crores approximately, to the level of proposed AIIMS like Institution. The PMSSY Scheme has been cleared by the Expenditure Finance Committee and Committee of Secretaries (COS) and is being processed for placing before Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) for approval.

Clinical trials

1274. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to refer to Starred Question 143 replied in Rajya Sabha on the 2nd December, 2005 and state:

(a) whether there is any provision in Schedule-Y which ensure a level of safety for clinical trials in India in the context of removal of time lag between clinical trials in India and outside; and